

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 NIC-01 PM-03 H-01 L-02

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /085 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1796

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 942

ROME FOR ILLING

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PO

SUBJ: DISPUTE AT RADIO RENASCENCA

SUMMARY: LABOR DISPUTE RELATED TO POLICY CONTROL AT CATHOLIC
RADIO STATION HAS ONCE AGAIN WORSENED. DISSIDENT
EMPLOYEES ARE THREATENING TO GO ON STRIKE, CATHOLIC HIERARCHY IS
COUNTERATTACKING WITH CHARGE OF DOCTRINAL USURPATION. COMMUNIST-
DOMINATED INTERSINDICAL HAS ISSUED TARDY STATEMENT GIVING SUPPORT
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TO EMPLOYEE GROUP. END SUMMARY.

1. SMOLDERING LABOR PROBLEM AT RADIO RENASCENCA, ONE OF THREE MAJOR RADIO STATIONS IN PORTUGAL AND ONLY ONE OWNED BY CATHOLIC CHURCH, HAS ONCE AGAIN WORSENERD. AFTER FOUR-MONTH ABSENCE FROM PUBLIC VIEW, NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN DISSIDENT EMPLOYEE GROUP AND HIERARCHY-DIRECTED MANAGEMENT COUNCIL HAVE BROKEN DOWN AND PUBLIC COMMUNIQUES AGAIN ARE FLYING.

2. PORTUGUESE EPISCOPATE ISSUED STRONGLY WORDED STATEMENT FEB 17 DENOUNCING "ILLIGITIMATE SITUATION" PREVAILING AT STATION DURING LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, WHICH HAS MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR CHURCH TO PROVIDE DOCTRINAL GUIDANCE IN PROGRAMMING. STATEMENT CALLS STATION'S "USURPATION" BY EMPLOYEES "THE MOST SERIOUS BLOW WHICH THE CHURCH, IN ATTEMPTING TO FULFILL ITS MISSION, HAS SUFFERED IN RECENT TIMES." STATEMENT GOES ON TO ACCUSE EMPLOYEES OF TRANSFORMING STATION INTO VEHICLE FOR PROPAGATION OF DOCTRINES "OPPOSED TO CHRISTIAN FAITH."

3. REPLYING TO HIERARCHY'S CHARGES, EMPLOYEE GROUP HAS DENIED USING STATION TO ATTACK CHURCH OR CHURCH'S TEACHING. EMPLOYEES' COMMUNIQUE ACKNOWLEDGES OCCASIONALLY HAVING TRANSMITTED PROGRAMS EMBARRASSING TO HIERARCHY, BUT DEFINDS SUCH ACTION WITHIN TERMS OF STATION'S OBLIGATION TO REPORT NEWS--EVEN WHEN SUCH REPORTS INVOLVE ATTACKS ON CHURCH OR CHRISTIAN FAITH. STATEMENT CLAIMS THAT GROUP SPEAKS FOR FIVE-SIXTHS OF STATION'S EMPLOYEES AND CHASTISES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL FOR HAVING TRANSFERRED DISPUTE FROM LABOR QUESTION INTO DOCTRINAL ONE.

4. EMPLOYEES HAVE THREATENED STRIKE FOR FEB 19.

5. COMMENT: NUNCIATURA OFFICIAL ASSESSED SITUATION AS ATTEMPT BY GROUP OF STATION EMPLOYEES, ENCOURAGED BY SOME OF MORE LIBERALLY-MINDED PRIESTS INVOLVED IN STATION'S OPERATIONS, TO SET PROGRAMMING POLICY. HE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT SOME AUTONOMY FROM HIERARCHY WAS DESIRABLE, BUT THAT EMPLOYEE GROUP'S GOAL WENT WELL BEYOND BOUNDS OF WHAT HIERARCHY COULD ACCEPT. RECENT EVENTS APPEAR BEAR OUT THIS INTERPRETATION. EMPLOYEE GROUP SPOKESMEN HAVE REFERRED TO SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED FROM CLERICAL ADVISERS FOR RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING (WHO WERE APPOINTED BY CARDINAL PATRIARCH OF LISBON). HOWEVER, CARDINAL PATRIARCH

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HIMSELF IS NOT KNOW TO OPPOSE LINE CURRENTLY ADOPTED BY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL.

6. ALTHOUGH COMMUNIST-DOINATED INTERSINDICAL HAS ISSUED COMMUNIQUE SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE GROUP, ITS SUPPORT UP TO THIS POINT HAS BEEN FAIRLY LOW KEY AND HAS APPEARED LATE IN THE DAY.
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